

COLUMBIA RIVER TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

January 4, 2017

Facilitator's Summary

Facilitator: Emily Stranz, Notes: Tory Hines, DS Consulting

The following Facilitator's Summary is intended to capture basic discussion, decisions and actions, as well as point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Chum Operation

Paul Wagner, NOAA, shared an update on chum operations. He noted that cumulative annual chum counts at the Bonneville adult fish ladder were 47. The last observation of live chum was on December 6th at the Ives/Pierce Island Complex, surveyors counted 22. Two surveys have been conducted since, however, no live chum were observed. Currently, Bonneville tailwater is ranging 14-15ft.

Tony Norris, BPA, shared that on December 21st, BPA and WDFW surveyed the Ives/Pierce Island redd locations to measure the depth of the redds. The survey consisted of gathering GPS data for the redds to determine the depth and level of submergence. Data is available on the TMT website.

He noted that the survey utilized the painted rocks previously used to mark the redds, however, at this point in the season the redds are difficult to make out. There were two locations where redds were marked: 7 redds were marked near the upstream break, and 6 redds were marked at Strawberry Island. Chinook redds were also surveyed.

Tony discussed the survey results which showed the elevation, date, time, and submergence data of all marked redds. He noted that at the time of the survey the tailwater elevation was 12.9 and there was significant flow out of Hamilton and Tanner Creeks. Tony pointed out that the Tanner Creek elevation is not the same as the Ives elevation, however, the elevations are correlated and BPA has a good understanding of the variables.

Survey results show that the redds at Strawberry Island were covered by +2ft of water. Tony noted that the tailwater could be dropped by 1-1.5ft and still provide adequate protection. For example, a tailwater of 12.2ft would still cover the highest redd measured in the Ives Island complex.

Paul asked if the highest redd location (redd 102 in the data chart online) was an outlier or an area where multiple redds were identified. Tony noted that it was likely an outlier location, with no indication if the rock had moved since it was originally dropped on the redd. With the exception of 102, all other redds were in the 2-2.5ft submergence range. He added that numerous chinook redds were observed in the 2ft submergence range and it is possible there were more at deeper levels.

Doug Baus, COE-NWD, stated that the current operation maintains a minimum tailwater elevation of 13ft at Bonneville Dam. The Action Agencies would like the TMT to consider that the minimum tailwater elevation be lowered considering the GPS survey results. Charles Morrill, WA, extended appreciation to BPA for providing the survey data and noted that 12.5ft tailwater elevation provides adequate protection for the chum redds, including the shallower outlier redd. Scott Bettin, BPA, stated that as the season progresses, and flexibility in the operation is needed, the redd locations in the Ives island area will allow for the minimum tailwater elevations to be set lower. Charles added that overall redd abundance in 2016 was better than in 2015 and numbers out of Hamilton Springs were similar to 2015 (~ 800 carcasses recovered in 2016).

Emily Stranz, DSC, asked for TMT member's input on the suggested operation change to a 12.5ft minimum

tailwater at all hours. There were no objections to the change in operation. Tony asked that data from Hamilton Springs be included in future chum spawning counts. Charles agreed to follow up with Todd to see if the Hamilton Creek counts could be made available next year. Scott also asked that Todd present on the status of the chum populations, as it was noted that the numbers are looking better than previous years. Charles agreed to ask Todd to provide a presentation at the next TMT meeting on January 18th. **TMT will revisit the Chum operation at their January 18th meeting.**

- **ACTION:** Charles Morrill will follow up with Todd regarding the Hamilton Creek count data and a presentation on the carcass surveys.
- **ACTION:** The Corps will implement the revised chum operation which modifies the minimum tailwater elevation from 13ft to 12.5ft. The revised operation is as follows:
 - Effective January 4, 2017, at 1400 hours, the Bonneville Dam minimum tailwater elevation is 12.5ft during all hours.

Clearwater Snow Update

Steve Hall, COE-Walla Walla, added that snowpack levels in the region are near average, with some areas above average and others below. He noted that the SWE is at 90%.

With that, Emily thanked the group for joining the call and the meeting was adjourned.

The next TMT meeting will be a face to face on January 18th at 9:00AM

Columbia River Regional Forum
TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM OFFICIAL MINUTES

January 4, 2017
Minutes: Pat Vivian

1. Introduction

Representatives of the Colville Tribe, Washington, USFWS, Idaho, BOR, NOAA, Montana, BPA, COE, Nez Perce Tribe, CRITFC and others participated in today's TMT call chaired by Doug Baus, COE, and Emily Stranz, DS Consulting.

2. Chum Operation

The latest count of adult chum below Bonneville Dam remains at 47, with no additional spawners counted since the last TMT meeting December 21, Paul Wagner, NOAA, reported. The highest weekly count for the 2016 season is 125.

With a current Bonneville tailwater elevation of around 14 ft, TMT's focus now is on establishing a protection level for the chum incubation phase, which typically end sometime near the end of March to early April. Tony Norris, BPA, reported on the results of a GPS survey of chum redds in the Ives Island area below Bonneville Dam, linked to today's agenda as item 2e. On the day the surveying was done, the water surface elevation above the chum redds was 11.3 ft which corresponded to a tailwater elevation at 12.9 ft at the Tanner Creek gage. While the relationship between water surface elevations at Tanner Creek and Ives Island is subject to variables such as the rate of flow in Hamilton Creek, at 12.9 ft most of the chum redds were inundated by around 2 ft of water with the exception of one outlier that had 0.7 ft submergence. This means the elevation at Tanner Creek could drop to 12.2 ft and all the Ives Island chum redds would be submerged. At 12 ft, all the redds except the outlier would have a buffer of approximately 1 ft. Wagner asked if the outlier might be representative of a number of redds, and Norris said probably not because even the WDFW staff person noted that he wasn't sure the rock marked an actual redd. The other chum redds observed in this area were deeper than the outlier.

Charles Morrill, Washington, noted that chum spawning was redistributed somewhat this year, perhaps impacted by heavy chinook spawning in the same areas. In 2015 about 1,100 chum spawned in the Multnomah Falls area, and 4,000 in the I-205 area. Preliminary counts indicate that this year will be equivalent to or better than last year in terms of chum abundance. As for the Hamilton Springs area, the final estimate of chum spawners will probably be close to last year. Norris asked whether Hamilton Springs and Duncan Creek tagging and carcass counts could be added next year to the abundance survey done by WDFW; Morrill said he will look into that. Scott Bettin, BPA asked that carcass surveying information by area be presented at the next TMT meeting.

Given this update, TMT members were polled on the proposed chum operation going forward: Drop the minimum BON tailwater elevation from 13 ft to 12.5 ft. Representatives of the **Colville Tribe, USFWS, Idaho, Montana, Nez Perce Tribe, BOR** and **CRITFC** approved of this operation. The Action Agencies will implement it effective today, January 4, at 1400 hours. If water becomes scarce, TMT will revisit the operation and consider adjustments downward to a minimum tailwater elevation of 12.2 or even 12 ft.

3. Next TMT Meeting

TMT will meet next in person on January 18.

Name	Affiliation
Sheri Sears	Colville Tribe
Charles Morrill	Washington
Dave Swank	USFWS
Russ Kiefer	Idaho
Mary Mellema	BOR
Paul Wagner	NOAA
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Tony Norris	BPA
Scott Bettin	BPA
Steve Hall	COE
Michael Bryant	CBB
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Scott Richards	Snohomish PUD
Julie Ammann	COE
Leslie XX	NPCC
Laura Hamilton	COE
Aaron Marshall	COE
Lisa Wright	COE
Tory Hines	DSC
Doug Baus	COE
Dave Statler	Nez Perce Tribe
Tom Lorz	CRITFC